



The Office of Vince Ryan  
County Attorney

October 28, 2010

Harris County Election Judges  
Harris County Alternate Election Judges

Opinion No. VR-0009 (2010)

Re: Supervision of Poll Watchers; C.A. File No. *10GEN2449*

This letter is to provide advice concerning the supervision of poll watchers by Harris County Election Judges and Alternate Election Judges.

Poll watchers are entitled to observe all election activity from the time the election workers arrive at the polling place to set up in the morning until the equipment is packed up and locked up at night. *See* TEX. ELEC. CODE § 33.056 (Vernon 2010). However, poll watchers are not allowed to follow voters into the "voting station" to observe the voters unless the voter requests assistance from an election judge or election clerk. *See* TEX. ELEC. CODE § 33.057 (Vernon 2010).

Questions have arisen as to what area of the polling place constitutes the "voting station." Generally, this area includes all of the area surrounding the location of the eSlate machines or the privacy booths where paper ballots may be marked.

Disputes may be minimized by marking lines on the floor indicating areas where the "voting station" is located. The Texas Secretary of State's office has indicated that as long as the lines are placed in a reasonable location, that this procedure is acceptable and has been used successfully in the past.

If you have any questions regarding the application of the advice above, please call Senior Assistant County Attorney Douglas P. Ray at (713) 755-3446 or (281) 935-1904. On Election Day, Assistant County Attorneys will also be available to provide advice on any issue of election law by calling the Voter Registrar's Call Center, (713) 368-2200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Vince Ryan", is written over the typed name and title.

VINCE RYAN  
Harris County Attorney